

# Margin

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## Quotes

1. Design dictates behavior.
2. When we accept diminished substitutes, we become diminished.  
(Cellphones, text msgs rather than face to face conversation)
3. Things that matter most should never be at the mercy of things that matter least – Goethe

Margin = Limit – Load ... = Your potential – your present situation



Stress occurs when you are consistently operating at or above your designed limit.

## The stress response curve



Adapted from Nixon P, Practitioner, 1979

Things that have given me reason to pause and consider ... Selah (according to Psalms)

1. Herniated disc
2. Severe health situation in a dear brother

Questions that arise:

1. What am I living for? At what finish line does my life point?

If you were accused of being a Christian, is there enough evidence to convict you as being guilty?

2. If I were to die today, what regrets would I have?

That said, how can I change my trajectory to “No Regrets”?

**Margin is the sweet spot, the space wherein we get to imagine with God!**

**Group Discussion Question #1**

What is that “one thing” that keeps you from reading your bible more, from spending more time with God or your family, that (insert desired activity) ...?

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God has given us healthy limits in our lives.

6 days to work, one to rest ... Sabbath

24 hours in a day, 7-9 hours to sleep

\$400 checking account withdrawals in one day

Tire inflation pressure – 33-35 PSI; perhaps 60-80 in high pressure tires

The handrail on the side of a balcony

What are some other healthy limits? \_\_\_\_\_

Do we intentionally look at healthy boundaries in our lives? Do we color within the lines? Eph. 2:10 – “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.”

Phil. 2:13 – “...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

2 Tim. 2: 20-21 – “In a large house, there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master, and prepared to do any good work.”

We are designed by God to do good works, to be ambassadors of his presence ... to be awesome! When we preserve margin, we’ll have room for other God-ordained activities.

Margin vs slothfulness

Men are designed to go to bed tired, having done a full day’s work. We’re not supposed to create hours of margin so that we can then insert hours of personal pleasure. Dopamine is the neurotransmitter in our brains most associated with pleasure. As such, we’re not designed by God to become dopamine addicts. This raises the a deeper question.

Do we serve God’s kingdom from a convenience mentality or by unction/calling?

Do you go to church because you can? Or because you must? Is your relationship so

dependent on God that you do everything in your power to meet with him on Sunday

mornings? A fanatic has been defined as someone who is one step closer to God than you.

A son wants his Dad to stay home and play ball with him.

Son: "Daddy, do you have to go to work?"

Father: "No, son, I **get** to go to work."

By conserving margin, we redeem the time, the resources, the "possibilities of his Presence."

Practical suggestions:

Financial – plan for a minimum of 10% savings, 10% tithe, and 80% cost of living

Physical – work 9 hours/day, sleep 8 hours, 30-60 minutes daily exercise, ~ 2 hours getting ready for work, 4 hours discretionary

Mental – read daily, engage your brain: muse vs amuse ... think vs no think; limit screen time

### **Spiritual margin**

Do we make room for the moving of God's Spirit in our lives? Or are we so compressed that we only have time for God 10 am - noon on Sunday?

24 hrs/day, 7 days/wk → 168 hrs/week.

If we only give God 2 hours per week on Sunday morning →  $2/168 = 1.2\%$

God frequently took people into the wilderness:

Abraham lived in a tent his entire life, even though he was in the Promised Land.

The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness (of their own accord due to unbelief)

Elijah → lived in the wilderness during the drought/famine

John the Baptist → lived in the wilderness

Jesus → "Driven by the Holy Spirit..." into the wilderness for 40 days to be tested by Satan

It has been said that "Wilderness is tonic to our spirit."

### **Wilderness in 2018:**

No internet/Wifi

No computer/cellphone/gadget

Scant food/water, or plain food

When is the last time you've spent more than 20 minutes in deep contemplation?

"In America, we now have creativity disuse atrophy" – John Fleming, MD

### **Group Discussion Question #2**

If I carved out time each week to think and ponder, on what would I focus?

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Psalm 8:3 – When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

Psalm 119: 15 – "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways."

(Live demo: Matt. 5:3-12, John 15: 1-8, Colossians 1: 15-20, Revelations 1: 12-18, Romans 8: 28-39)

Proverbs 28:14 – "Blessed is the one who ***always trembles before God***, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble."

No God; no peace  
Know God; know peace

“No” is a holy word. Say “No” to margin wasters.

**Margin wasters:**

Most TV      Most movies      Many/most cellphone brain vacuums

FOMO – Fear of missing out. Gotta check every FB post as it comes up.

At work, the paralysis of analysis

The continuing need for more data/input before reaching a decision and moving towards action

Other margin wasters – group shout outs: \_\_\_\_\_

Some conversations (discussing politics with someone who is only interested in expressing their opinion but not interested in thinking about the issue)

Drop in visitors

Meetings

Crises

Lack of daily work plan or priorities

Cluttered desk, disorganization

Leaving tasks unfinished

Ineffective delegation

Attempting to do too much at once

Inadequate communication

Procrastination

Confused responsibility/ authority

**Ways to preserve margin**

Discipline: Hebrews 12: 11-13

Schedule keeping – don’t just make a schedule but keep to it

Guard the early morning hours for God – give him first place, even for 2-3 minutes

Touch “paper” once. With every email, delete it or action it: Outlook example

Use the wastebasket - frequently!

Handle paperwork only once

Overcome perfectionism and settle for excellence

Say “No”

Take a break

Keeping lists

Keeping a calendar and deadlines

After action reports

Proper filing system

**Group discussion question #3**

What is the one thing(s) to which I will consecrate myself? On which I will focus more intently? To whom I will give more of myself?

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We are designed to do good works. We’re also blessed with access to the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16). I would remind us that Jesus was a carpenter for ~ 30 years. He understands and designs structure into his kingdom. He knows the strength, density, and attributes of the materials he has to work with (namely, you and me).

Treasure margin – it is the space in which we dance and dream with God.